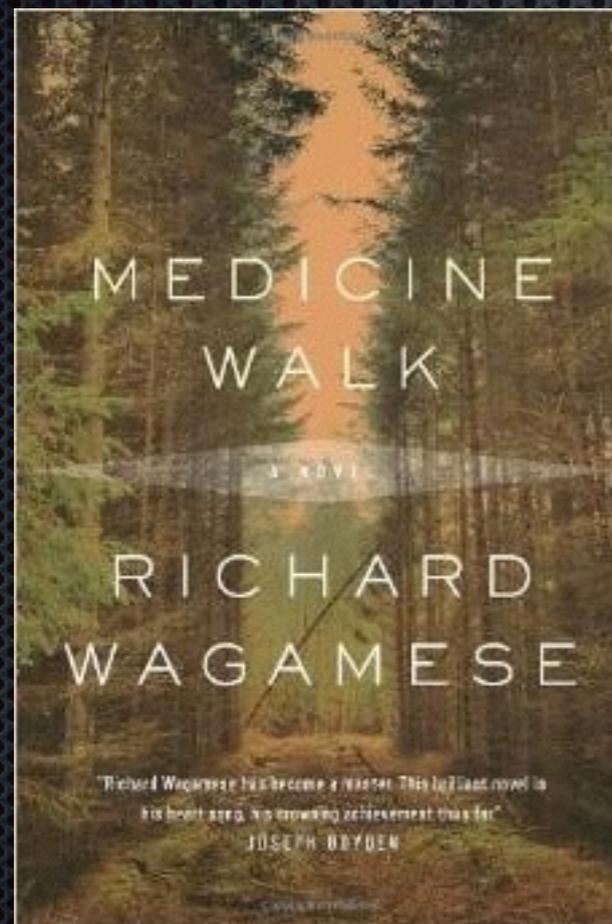


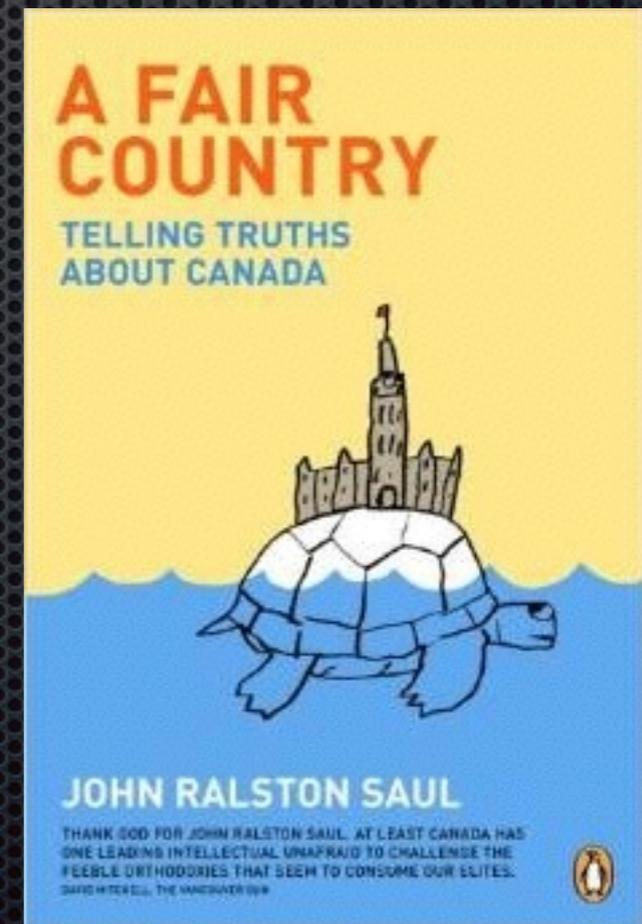
First Nation Perspectives

Two Studies



ACTS
Fall 2014

St David's United
Church Calgary



Session 5 - Agenda

1. Openings
 - Mike Grammer - Reflections on Wagamese
 - Ken Kittridge - Reflections on Saul
2. A Fair Country - A Metis Civilization - Ch 1-3
3. Song - Buffy St. Marie - My Country Tis of Thy People
3. Video
 - Karen McKeown - Oprah reads Kidd
4. Break
5. Discussions in Small Group
6. Discussions in the Whole
8. Closing - Joan Gray

Openings

1. Mike Grammer - Reflection on Wagamese
2. Ken Kittridge - Reflection on Saul



RUPERT'S LAND

A Metis Civilization

Intro - Power of a Story

- “To insist on describing ourselves as something we are not is to embrace existential illiteracy.”
- “The outcome of all this is an increasingly dysfunctional elite, ill-tempered to the role it is meant to play. As for the citizenry as a whole, we show signs of uncertainty and frustration, as if we feel ourselves adrift.”
- “We are a people of Aboriginal inspiration organized around a concept of peace, fairness and good government. That is what lies at the heart of our story,” “We are a people of Aboriginal inspiration organized around a concept of peace, fairness and good government. That is what lies at the heart of our story,



Young Métis Voyageurs at Batouche, Saskatchewan, 2005.
Courtesy of Métis National Youth Advisory Council

A Metis Civilization

Ch 1 - What Shaped Us

- “We are a métis civilization. What we are today has been inspired as much by four centuries of life with the indigenous civilizations as by four centuries of immigration. Perhaps more. Today we are the outcome of that experience. As have Métis people, Canadians in general have been heavily influenced and shaped by the First Nations. We still are. We increasingly are. This influencing, this shaping is deep within us.”
- “... our intuitions and common sense as a civilization are more Aboriginal than European or African or Asian”

A Metis Civilization

Ch 1 - What Shaped Us

- “This talent, we seem to be saying, for living comfortably with diversity, is our particular contribution to Western Civilization.”
- “On the single issue of immigration and citizenship diversity, we seem unable to notice the obvious — that it is a non-racial idea of civilization, and non-linear, even non-rational. It is based on the idea of an inclusive circle that expands and gradually adapts as new people join us. This is not a Western or European concept. It comes straight from Aboriginal culture.”

A Metis Civilization

Ch 1 - What Shaped Us

- “Throughout the Western world in the second half of the nineteenth century, middle-class, pew-chained and empire-obsessed civilizations gradually slipped toward the paranoid fears of the twentieth century.”
- “And so children of the Enlightenment around the world ... turned their back on the central premise of humanist philosophy and set about fearing the other, then killing the other in a multitude of ways ... a killing frenzy of two world wars followed by a multitude of localized but equally violent clashes.”

A Metis Civilization

Ch 1 - What Shaped Us

- “So it is both curious and troubling that we cannot bring ourselves to talk about how profoundly our society has been shaped over four centuries in its non-monolithic, non-European manner by the First Nations. Our immigrant society was fragile, tiny and poor everywhere in Canada until well into the nineteenth century.”
- “Over the first two hundred and fifty years of settler life in Canada, the newcomers had at best reached the level of partnership with the Aborigines.”



A Metis Civilization

Ch 2 - Marrying Up

- “If today’s land claims, treaty rights and membership in particular First Nations seem to be dependent on definitions of race, that is entirely the outcome of a European-imposed approach, one that had nothing to do with the Aboriginal idea of expandable and inclusive circles of people.”
- “We don’t think of ourselves that way simply because the myth-makers of the late nineteenth century were busy writing out Canada’s past ...”

A Metis Civilization

Ch 2 - Marrying Up

- “By marrying into the indigenous world, most of the newcomers were marrying up. They were improving their situations socially, politically and economically. They were improving their conditions of life—food, clothing, even the suitability of their housing—and thus their health, their power, their status, their mobility, their safety, their cleanliness, the odds that their teeth wouldn’t fall out.”
- “Champlain said, “Our young men will marry your daughters, and we shall be one people.””

A Metis Civilization

Ch 2 - Marrying Up

- “The Hudson’s Bay Company built its networks—for more than two hundred years one of the world’s largest commercial and political structures—in good part through interracial marriages.”
- “The newcomers were welcomed. They were taught how to survive by the Aborigines. How to dress. How to eat to avoid scurvy, which simply killed those who wouldn’t adapt.”
- an example was Peter Lougheed, a recent premier of Alberta. His grandfather married Bell Hardisty of Metis “Alberta Aristocracy”.

A Metis Civilization

Ch 2 - Marrying Up

- “The capacity to adapt to reality is a sign of intelligence in any civilization. In the Arctic, one of the principal causes of death among the British and U.S. explorers was their refusal to dress, act or eat like savages. From the 1830s on, they deliberately chose to ignore the example and the advice of voyageurs, Métis and Inuit.”
- “The explorers’ stupidity and incapacity to adapt has been recast in this European interpretation of Canada as a drama, a human tragedy. Not stupidity.”

A Metis Civilization

Ch 2 - Marrying Up

- “One thing is clear—the persistence of the Victorian description of Canada’s past lies at the heart of many of our difficulties today. That Victorianism came late, was not a force for democracy, tried to drag us into imperial wars, blocked the sense that we had paintings to paint and books to write that expressed our reality. It is the root of that same Victorianism that still makes many Canadians think the Aboriginal situation is a situation and a problem. And it makes us feel that this country must always be the supplicant of some great power. If not one, another will do.”

Haida, Riel, Big Bear, Poundmaker



Battle of Fish Creek, Nunavut

A Metis Civilization

Ch 3 - Double Denial

- “In this same period, across the prairies there was growing poverty and suffering among First Nations as their ability to feed themselves was destroyed and the government’s recent treaty promises were broken.”
- Settler land hunger was the force behind what we did wrong. The Riel Rebellion of 1885 was our low point. And today the ideas and leadership of the rebels Poundmaker, Big Bear and Louis Riel are honoured.
- “We are gradually returning to attitudes that predate the racially based, European-driven divisions of the late nineteenth century.”

A Metis Civilization

Ch 3 - Double Denial

- “The single greatest failure of the Canadian experiment, so far, has been our inability to normalize —that is, to internalize consciously—the First Nations as the senior founding pillar of our civilization.”
- “To put this in the straightforward language of Jack Sissons, the first judge of the North: “They have much to offer Canada.” The rest of us act as if this is not the case.”

A Metis Civilization

Ch 3 - Double Denial

- History tells us how disease killed 95% of the aboriginal population of the Americas.
- The Haida population fell from 20,000 to 588 people.
- This helped newcomers think the Native Peoples were a dying race, and led in turn to policies of assimilation.
- First Nation population is now rising. The Haida are now 4000 folk.
- A new opportunity is before us. We must seek a “healthy relationship” with the First Nations Peoples.

A Metis Civilization

Ch 3 - Double Denial

- The 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was an excellent reassessment of what happened and what might be done to go forward.
- “The failure of family functioning can be traced in many cases to interventions of the state deliberately introduced to disrupt or displace the Aboriginal family.”
... 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

A Metis Civilization

Ch 3 - Double Denial

- “There is a clarity in the commission’s report that is part of its power. And so in spite of the official silence, its principles have begun to make their way into public policy: the Nunavut agreement, which in 1999 cut the Northwest Territories in half to give the Inuit a self-governing territory; the Nisga’a Agreement, which in 1999 established a new approach to First Nations settlements; and perhaps most strategic, the Supreme Court’s 1997 Delgamuukw ruling, which introduced, or rather reintroduced, oral culture into the heart of Canadian law. . . . This great document is slowly making its way because it is the most important statement we now have of our reality—one that embraces “a relationship of mutual trust and loyalty” and deals with the real role of the Aboriginal peoples in Canada.”

Discussion Questions

1. Is Saul's notion just a sentimental collection of stories, or does it better describe Canada's history, present and future?
2. Where does inclusive politics come from?
3. We hanged Riel and later built statues of him. Why?
- 4.

Break - Karen McKeown

Oprah reading poem of Sue Monk Kidd - 2m12s

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/22/sue-monk-kidd-poem-nature-oprah_n_5187395.html

A landscape photograph of a golden field at sunrise with mountains in the background and the text "SUPER SOUL SUNDAY" overlaid. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The field is filled with tall grasses, and the sky is a mix of light blue and yellow. The text is in a bold, serif font, with "SUPER SOUL" in a lighter shade and "SUNDAY" in a darker shade. The overall mood is peaceful and inspirational.

SUPER SOUL SUNDAY

BREAK

15 minutes





Buffy St. Marie,

Canadian Cree Singer, Educator, Activist

<http://buffy-sainte-marie.blogspot.ca/>

My Country Tis of Thy People

Next Week

Reading - A Metis Civilization - Chapters 4-7

Website & Course Materials

Website:

mwafc.stdavidscalgary.net

sduc.ca

Summary Presentations,

Videos are linked,

Handouts

Links to additional information

Printouts for those without internet.

Closing - Joan Gray

